

[Dr. Sir A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliyar] [24th November 1948]

its patronage, and so long as it is exercised in a judicious manner, I have nothing to complain against. Only when judicious considerations are not clearly visible, the public begin to complain. I ask you to consider this seriously. In my opening remarks, I invited the Hon. Food Minister to speak, but he kept silent. In some cases perhaps silence is a golden virtue and my friend knows how to preserve it. I said that if proper care was not taken of lands, there would be a great setback to the Grow More Food Campaign. I said also that modern methods should be adopted for bringing these lands under cultivation if we were to benefit by these lands. The Government have said that they wish to distribute these lands to the Harijans, the backward communities and the landless poor and I thoroughly agree with them. But let them set up a machinery independent of the Government to make the distribution. Let them give to that body freedom to frame the necessary rules. Only then there will be freedom for the Government from the irksome burden due to innumerable persons putting pressure of various degrees and wringing the lands as it were from the Government. I know what I am speaking about. It does not apply to this Government alone; it applies to all forms of democratic Government.

“ I say that these lands should be handed over to the Co-operative department for cultivation. The Government should start well-organized co-operative societies consisting of people who know co-operation, who believe in co-operation, and not of people who know of personal co-operation only.

“ Sir, I will conclude as the time is getting near. It is with great regret that we have to express these views on a very important Bill on which we very much wished that there should have been unanimity. There was a possibility of unanimity. The Hon. Revenue Minister said that about 12 crores of rupees were to be paid as compensation. I asked for a little more information. . . .”

MR. PRESIDENT:—“ The hon. Member can continue his speech to-morrow.”

DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—“ I will finish in two minutes, as to-morrow I am not likely to attend.”

MR. PRESIDENT:—“ I cannot help. There is an adjournment motion and it has got to be taken up at 4 o'clock.”

V.—ADJOURNMENT MOTION *RE* RISE IN FARES OF CITY BUSES.

4 p.m. * ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—“ Mr. President, Sir, I rise to move my adjournment motion for censuring the Government for increasing the fares in Government transport buses in the city. Sir, I am really sorry that at least for the pre-

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sent the Hon. Minister for 'Transport is not here, but I must thank him for having agreed to allow this adjournment motion to discuss this very serious and important matter which is agitating the public mind in the City of Madras.

" Sir, you are aware that there has been a great deal of agitation by the public, both in the press and on the platform with regard to the increase of fares in the city transport, but people thought that this proposal would not fructify and that the Government would not put it into force all of a sudden. From the press reports it is seen that when the Advisory Committee met recently to consider the question of increasing the bus fares in the city, the President of the Bus Passengers' Association staged a walk out in protest. People really thought that the Government would take note of this and would not bring about the increase, but would continue the existing rates only.

" Now, Sir, the very object of the nationalization of the bus transport has been defeated by the increase in bus fares. When the Government introduced the nationalization scheme, we were all feeling rather a little bit happy that not only amenities for transport would be increased, not only rickety buses would be removed but also that the fares would be decreased, so that people with little incomes might be able to travel cheaply and with comfort. But it is difficult to understand how the Government have thought of increasing the bus fares, contrary to the expectations of the people. The cost of living, as everybody knows, has already increased considerably and has been increasing by leaps and bounds and it is over 300 per cent of what it was during normal times and now in addition to that, these bus fares have also been increased. How are the people to meet this extra expenditure? People who own cars and people who are rich have no need to worry themselves about this, but what about poor people who have got fixed incomes and low-paid Government servants, clerks, people employed in commercial firms, poor students and other people whose incomes are very limited? If these people are asked to pay 50 per cent more for their transport every day, how is it possible for them to make both ends meet? Sir, this aspect of the question has been completely ignored by the Government, which ought to have been considered very seriously."

MR. PRESIDENT:—" Will the hon. Member please state what the rates before were and how they were increased, so that we might follow the discussion? "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—" Sir, I have got in my possession a very interesting letter just now received by me from some people, stating what hardships they have been put to, and they have attached some bus tickets also. Sir, the previous rate, for instance, from Central to Triplicane was only 1 anna, but now it has been increased to 1½ annas. The rate from Mount Road to Triplicane was only 1 anna before, but now

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it is 1½ annas. If a man travels from Parry's Corner to Theagaroyanagar, he has now to pay 4½ annas, whereas he was paying only 3 annas before. Therefore about 50 per cent increase has been made in respect of many routes. If fares are increased in this manner, what difference is there between the Government transport and the private transport? The object of nationalization of motor transport was to give greater facilities to people and to lessen the fares. Even to-day, if in a private bus which comes from Saidapet to Parry's Corner, a person gets in at the Teynampet Post office, it is enough if he pays 2 annas to reach Parry's Corner, while he has to pay 2½ annas if he gets into a Government bus which passes that way to the same place. Formerly it was even less."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Are there still private companies operating in Madras? "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" I am speaking of the infassal bus which comes into the City, Sir.

" Then again, Sir, may I ask the Hon. Minister for Transport whether he has also considered the question of increasing the salary, at least to this extent, of the low-paid Government servants? If he has not done so, how can he expect these people to pay for this extra expenditure to come to their offices? Does he expect them to walk all the distance from their houses to their offices? Even if they could afford to walk, how could they reach their offices in time. If the Government cannot provide them with free conveyances, at least they should see that they do not increase the existing fares on Government buses or at least they should meet this extra expenditure by increasing their pay to that extent. Sir, the agitation is already there, though it is suppressed, because of the fear that the Government would penalize those who agitate. Anyhow, it must be admitted that it would be very hard for them to pay this increase in fares out of their present salary.

" Now, Sir, the other question is this. Where was the necessity to increase the bus fares? The Hon. Minister for Transport said some time ago that the Government transport buses are not running at a loss, but on the other hand they are running at a profit. If so, where was the necessity to increase the rates? On the other hand one would have naturally expected that the rates should be reduced. There is also the other factor, Sir, that the Government are paying a lesser amount for petrol than the private company does. I understand that they pay Rs. 1-11-6 per gallon, whereas private bus companies are paying Rs. 2-1-6. I am not sure of this, but I state this subject to correction. I believe the Government do not pay the tax of 4 annas per gallon."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" Does the hon. Member mean Sales Tax? "

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" I do not know what tax it is, but I think they are paying 4 annas less than private transport companies. The Government, it appears,

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also save 2 annas which is the commission that is paid for petrol bunks, which other people will have to pay. I want to know from the Government whether this information is correct. I am also told that the petrol bunk owner gets this commission from the petrol companies, such as Burma Shell, while the Government do not pay such a commission."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member should be sure of his facts before he speaks on the subject."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, we have to get these facts only from the Government and this is the occasion on which we have to get at the facts. It is not possible for us to get this information elsewhere, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"Is there any difference in price between the petrol supplied to private people and to the Government?"

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Sir, we are only getting petrol from the bunks and we get the dealer's commission. Even private transport companies like the S.I.B.T. get this 2 annas commission from the Burma Shell Company."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, big private companies might get this commission. But are there no private owners who own only one or two fleet of buses?"

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I suppose the hon. Member has seen the press interview given by the Government wherein they have stated that these increases are not real increases, but only a rationalization of fares. I think it is better if the hon. Member addresses himself to this aspect of the matter and say how it is not rationalization, but an increase of rates."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I am sorry, Sir, it cannot at all be called rationalization; on the contrary I am saying that it is irrationalization."

"Sir, I may submit that I came to know from the press report which was published in the 'Madras Mail' of last Friday, that the Hon. Minister for Transport himself has regretted this increase in rates and said that it was done in his absence."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Did the hon. Member believe it?"

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, the Hon. Minister says that I should not believe in press reports. It is a very good advice no doubt, but I want to know whether he contradicts the same."

"Sir, it was reported in the 'Madras Mail' of the 19th November that when the public dissatisfaction about the rationalization of fares was pointed out to the Hon. Sri B. Gopala Reddi, the Minister for Transport, he said that the scheme was introduced in his absence and that he would reconsider the matter."

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THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“ Sir, I said that it was introduced no doubt in my absence, but with regard to the report that I regretted as to what has been done and that I promised to reconsider the matter, I may state, Sir, that they are not at all correct.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ It may be for further increase ! ”
(Laughter.)

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ Reconsideration means, reconsideration only for the reduction, Sir. If the Hon. Minister for Transport does not want me to believe this and says that this report is incorrect, I have nothing to say about it.

“ Sir, everybody asks what is the justification for this increase. I have already pointed out that with the present increased cost of living all round, people are not able to make both ends meet and if people are asked to pay this increased rates now, how is it possible for them to get on? When this increase has been effected, Sir, what are the amenities that have been provided to the public? What are the reasons that actuated the Government to increase the fares. Have they added anything to the buses or have they given additional amenities to the people? There must have been some factor which induced the Government to increase the rates. We want to know what those factors are which actuated either the Hon. the Minister or anybody else to effect this increase.

“ Then let us come to the nationalization scheme itself. Where was the necessity for it? When private buses were running formerly there was competition.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ The hon. Member should restrict himself to the question of fares.”

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ All other things which I may mention are consequential, Sir. When formerly the private buses were there, there was competition between the various companies and the various individuals. And then, the Government would not allow those people to increase the fares. When on any occasion there was an increase even of 3 pies the people agitated and the Government intervened and prevented the bus company from increasing the fares. Now because there is this nationalization there is this rationalization and people think that there is no check upon the Government because of their monopolistic tendency. The Government have been going on arbitrarily without consulting the public and taking public opinion and without having regard to the convenience of the public and without having any regard for the conditions of the poor people and even without regard to their own servants they have increased these fares. Is it not just, Sir, on the part of the people to agitate in regard to this matter? And the agitation has been going on in the press, and on the platform. It is incumbent on the Government to consider that agitation.

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“ Now, Sir, you have asked me to restrict myself to the increase of fares. But people ask other questions. They ask about the condition of the buses because it is on the good condition in which the buses are kept that people wish to pay their fares. For instance if there is a very good and new taxi people will pay more for it. If that is a rickety car people won't pay more. What is the condition in which the Government transport buses are kept? They are rickety and the seats in the buses are torn . . . ”

THE HON SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“ Don't get into them. ”

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ This is exactly the hard-heartedness and want of sympathy of the Government. And this is what exactly the conductor says. Probably the conductor has got the infection from the Hon. Minister and the Government and he says ‘ Don't get into the buses. ’ The driver says : ‘ I don't mind whether you get in or not. I will get my salary. ’ They know the mentality of the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister says : ‘ Don't get into the buses. ’ (Laughter.)

“ There is the other aspect of the question also, Sir. Formerly when there was competition, and when private people were running the buses if the bus by some chance got out of order on the way the driver who is generally also a mechanic used to attend to the bus and see that the people reached their destination. Now I am told, Sir—I speak subject to correction—that if a Government bus stops on the way the driver has no power to touch the engine. A man from the workshop has to come and he has to attend to the bus. In the meantime the passengers must be stranded. Formerly when the private companies were running the buses the conductor or the driver would see to it that the passengers reached their destination either through a bus of the same company or some other company. If it was not possible for them to do this they used to refund the fares that they received from the passengers. But now people are stranded and people are asked : ‘ All right. Why did you get into the Government bus? ’ The Minister too, you see, Sir, has got the same view. As the driver cannot touch the bus a mechanic will come after 3 or 4 days or after a month and see whether the bus could be moved from that place or not. In the meantime the conductor will tell the passengers : ‘ Don't ask me to put you in some other bus or refund the money. I have already sold the ticket and I am responsible to the Government for that money. ’ Is that the manner, Sir, in which this thing has to be done? Is it not commercial affair, Sir? Is it a political affair? Is it not that either the Government want to get more money or they want to give more conveniences to the public? If the Government want to get more money, Sir, then I would say that this is a wrong policy. What is the Government after all? The Government is a body of people who are there to look to the conveniences of the general public. And if there is a Government which do not look to the conveniences of the general public then it is but right for the people to think that that Government should not be there and if they are helpless to

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oust that Government from office they can only pray to God that this Government should go. That is the only way. If that Government takes upon itself to do something, it must see that it is done for the good of the people and for the advantage of the people. Taking that view, Sir, whatever is done by the Government it is supposed to be done in the interests of the people. And now the nationalization of the bus transport was done or is supposed to have been done in the interests of the people. But now we find that it is detrimental to the interests of the people. If the Government have more responsible things to look to and if they could not take upon themselves this work, the only thing that they could do is to leave it to people who were able to manage it and were managing it better until such time as the Government are free to take on themselves this work.

"I feel, Sir, that this increase in fares has been made in order to meet the expenses in connexion with the huge white elephant organization. Where is the necessity for I.C.S. and other highly paid officers, Sir, for this transport business? Without meaning any discourtesy or disparagement to any officer, I want to ask where was the necessity in a small matter like this where ordinary people could have . . ."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Can a lower division clerk manage it?"

MR. PRESIDENT:—"The Hon. Minister will have a full chance of replying."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Let the Minister also understand . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"What the Hon. Minister meant was that this was a work where a bigger man was necessary."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"But, Sir, people less qualified than the lower division clerk were able to manage the buses much better than the top-ranking officials. That is the opinion of the public, Sir. And what is the result of these officials being there? When there is this top-heavy expenditure what will the Government get? Therefore it appears the Government thought of increasing the fares in spite of the fact that the Hon. Minister—I do not want to use harsh words, Sir—was hoodwinking the public by saying that the Government were getting more money out of this transport."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I suppose you are one of those who were hoodwinked. Were you not one of that small party whom the Hon. Minister invited to a conference?"

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I am glad, Sir, that I am not generally in those things. Even in regard to a matter, Sir, about which I moved a Bill I was not asked to go there, for instance, the racing affair. Many people were invited to see the races and say whether it was good or not but I was not invited."

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THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“ The next time I shall certainly invite the hon. Member.”

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ I am not enamoured of any invitation either from the Hon. Minister or anybody else, Sir. I am satisfied, Sir, with the invitation from the poor people to represent them here on their behalf.

“ Therefore, Sir, the big staff is there to manage this big department. Suppose the Government says that one bus should start at a particular time to suit the convenience of the Secretariat staff or other Government servants to come to office. That order reaches the bus time-keeper after one month. That is the red-tapism of the Government machinery. In private companies there is no question of red-tapism? The owner of the company is interested in getting more money and therefore he is interested in giving more amenities and facilities to the public because he wants to become more popular so that the buses may be used. He wishes that more people should enter his buses. Neither the Transport Commissioner nor any Superintendent or whoever he is, is concerned, nor is the Hon. Minister concerned about anybody getting into the bus. He says: ‘ I do not mind. What do I care? If the Government is getting more money it is not going to increase my salary. Therefore it is not my affair whether you get into the bus or not.’ The conductor says, ‘ I will get my salary. What do I care whether you get into the Government bus or not? ’ The driver says: ‘ You better walk out. The bus has stopped and I cannot touch the bus because it is a Government bus. My salary is not in any way lessened on account of this.’ Therefore the point is that there is no responsibility at all. I want to point out that in matters like this there should be responsibility. In private firms, Sir, there was responsibility. The owner was there, the conductor was there and the driver was there. And it was to the common interest of all these people to see that the bus did not stop. If the bus stopped and if the driver did not put it in order he would have been taken to task and his salary would not be paid. That is not the case here. If the conductor did not take in as many passengers as the bus would contain and if he did not bring in a large collection in the night he would not get his salary. Therefore it was his constant care to see that these things were done well. But who is going to ask now? No complaint can be made and if at all a complaint is to be made it must be made to the Hon. Minister. He may be on tour and he may not be able to see the paper for he will be engaged in more important affairs. Therefore, Sir, it is on account of all these things that there has been agitation for a long time. Therefore this matter has to be taken into consideration very seriously. Now, Sir, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. John, says that the Government should be condemned in this matter. Sir, condemnation is from the whole public of Madras; condemnation is from all Government servants who travel in the Government buses; condemnation is from the poor students who cannot afford to go to their schools and colleges in time for their studies; condemnation

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is from the poor man, the ordinary man, who cannot pay the increased bus fares but has to walk through in order to reach his place of avocation or business. Condemnation is all through from every citizen. It is not a condemnation only from Dr. John or from you or from anybody else but it is a condemnation which this Government should be ashamed of. There may be condemnations. But a condemnation of this character is a condemnation which must affect the Government also. Even though they are in a majority, they must feel in their heart of hearts that matters like this will go a long way to discredit them in public. It will discredit not only individual Ministers but will also lower the prestige of the party to which they belong. Sir, that party, in principle, wants to do good to the people and wants to elevate the people and to lessen their hardships. But, Sir, this Government, I am sorry to say, this Government which represents that party, which claims to represent that party, namely, the Congress party, are increasing the hardships of the people by every step they are taking and thus they are lowering the estimate of that great party in public eyes.

“Sir, there are a number of things and I have got a number of cuttings to show that everywhere there is condemnation.”

MR. PRESIDENT:—“There is no limit of time. The hon. Member may take even two hours!”

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—“I do not want to take time unnecessarily, Sir, because time is not a factor in a matter like this. Whether I say one word or two thousand words, it is immaterial. The very word ‘condemnation’ is sufficient. It will be a best substitute for a speech of two hours and perhaps more. Therefore, Sir, it is not a question of time. With your courtesy, I can take a longer time. You have always been courteous, kind and generous to me. Sir, I think this is a matter in which the Hon. the Minister for Transport has to sympathize with the public. Public condemnation, there may be, it is a different thing. But, if there is a Ministry devoid of human sympathy and if the public are oppressed and depressed on account of this want of sympathy on the part of the Ministry, it is a very very unenviable position both to the public and to the Ministry. Sir, it is a most deplorable position in which the Ministry is placed and is placing the public at large. Therefore, Sir, in the interests of common justice, in the interests of fairness and in the interests of removal of the hardships of the people, the Minister for Transport must reconsider the question more dispassionately and reconsider what his own department have done without having any question of prestige and he should straightaway tell this House, Sir, before you, that he is going to lessen the fares, at least the increased fares—I do not know whether he will lessen the fares prevailing before but I hope he will lessen at least the fares increased now. If he does that, Sir, then the whole public will be indebted to him. I know the Hon. the Minister for Transport is a gentleman who has got sympathy for the public but the difficulty seems to be the machinery through which he has to act and out of

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which he cannot extricate himself. That is the whole difficulty. It is stated in the newspaper that he will reconsider the question. I am not very well versed, but as we know the English language, reconsideration means, not further increase, but decrease. That is what reconsideration means. Therefore, Sir, outside this House and outside any official entanglements, the Minister has shown his sympathy. Even so, he should reconsider this question.

"Then, Sir, another thing which the Hon. Minister is reported to have said is this. He may now contradict it and I have already once seen the Minister contradicting his statement in order to escape from the clutches of the newspapers. Sir, in recent months, we have seen Minister after Minister contradicting what the Press report has said and saying that they have not said so."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Does the hon. Member suppose that invariably the Press is right and the Ministers are in the wrong? Again, the 'Madras Mail'."

DR. V. K. JOHN:—"Nothing like the 'Madras Mail' but 'The Mail,' a very independent paper."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, the Hon. Minister is reported to have promised to examine all these questions. The questions were these. It is reported in the 'Mail' as follows:—

'It was then explained to the Minister that the reorganization of the stages would be a great hardship to passengers, that the stages had been arranged arbitrarily, and that stages ended or began at places where normally people did not board or alight from buses. It would also appear that care had been taken to fix stages a short distance from busy places like the Royapetta Hospital, resulting in passengers having to pay half-an-anna more than previously. Another grave inequity was that passengers had to pay double or treble what they would have to pay on the basis of actual distance, for beginning their travel from fractions of a stage and ending it with fractions of other stages.'

The Minister may now contradict. But it is reported that the Minister promised to examine all these questions and that he added that many of these points might be considered in the Legislative Council, on Monday, when the House would take up an adjournment motion by Mr. Abdul Latif Farookhi Sahib on the subject. It is also stated: 'Incidentally the Transport Minister said that they had put a greater number of buses on the City routes and the daily collection, which were previously about Rs. 2,000 on an average had increased by about Rs. 1,000 recently, even without standardization.'

"Now, Sir, I hope the Hon. the Transport Minister will certainly answer these points and I do not want to go into their details. But there is one point which is interesting. The Hon. Minister is reported to have said—I do not know whether this also will be contradicted—that more buses have been put on the routes. As a matter of fact, everybody knows that at least half the number

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of buses are in the workshop. Sir, people say that more buses are in the workshop. I do not know whether any substantial number of buses are in the workshop."

* MR. PRESIDENT :—" Does the ' Mail ' say that Rs. 2,000 is the daily collection? "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" It is reported in the ' Mail,' Sir, as follows :—

' Incidentally the Transport Minister said that they had put a greater number of buses on the City routes and the daily collection, which were previously about Rs. 2,000 on an average had increased by about Rs. 1,000 recently, even without standardization.' "

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" The rest of the report is as correct as that."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" It may be Rs. 20,000 and there may be a misprint and a cipher might have been omitted."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Is it in figures or in words? "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" It is in figures but there is only the omission of a cipher. (Laughter.) Now, Sir, the Hon. Minister is reported to have said that more buses have been put on the routes. But, what is the actual position? Well, Sir, if you take your car from Parry's Corner along China Bazaar, Fruit Market, Central Station and other places you will find a large number of people at bus stands so much so that even for hours together they do not get buses to go to their places. Perhaps they do not feel so much inconvenience when they return from their offices because they may reach homes at 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock, but they feel greater inconvenience when they have to go to their offices in time.

" Another important thing is this. In trying to get near the bus stand and in trying to get into the bus, people are pushing in and pushing out. There is, so to say, really a tug-of-war. With the passengers pushing in and pushing out, sometimes people get injured and some old people cannot at all get into buses. It is very difficult for them. Then, Sir, what is the meaning of saying that more buses have been put on the routes? I ask, Sir, how many more buses are put on the routes in order to relieve the congestion at the bus stands in the various places. Therefore, Sir, it is necessary that all these things have to be taken into consideration. Inspecting staff have to be arranged to find out as to how many passengers are stranded at various places.

" Then, Sir, about the cleaning of buses. If the Hon. the Health Minister only happens to travel in one of the buses, he will no doubt feel that he should protest against the department of the Hon. the Minister for Transport for the uncleanness of those buses. Sanitation is totally absent. It is because from the morning till the buses reach their destination, they are not cleaned for

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hours and again in the next morning they start in the same condition. You will find scraps of paper there and every possible dirt is there because the conductor and the driver simply leave the buses in the place of destination and rush out to their homes and there is nobody to look into the buses or to clean those buses and therefore, in the morning, the buses start in the same condition as they were on the previous day."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" And not the day previous to that ! "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" It is going on. It remains so for months together and there is no cleaning. I want the Hon. Minister for Transport to consider all these points and to appoint people to look after these things. I hope in his reply he will say that all these mistakes will be corrected and more amenities will be given to the people.

" Then, Sir, there are the hangers and the rods which the standing passengers catch hold of while travelling because there are so many jerks. Sir, these hangers have to be provided conveniently. Similarly, there are other grievances and if I am allowed to enumerate all those grievances, I think even two hours will not be sufficient. But, I simply see that the Government are happy over the state of affairs. I would have allowed them to be more happy regardless of what they are doing so that the public may know what answer to give them when they go before them. I would have done that. But as a friend of the Government, I have to point out to them the other side of the picture and put it into their mind. Therefore, Sir, I move that this Government should be condemned for their City Bus Transport policy."

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Mr. President, Sir, I think I should mention at the beginning that Mr. Suryanarayana Rao, myself and some members of the Assembly were invited by the Hon. Minister to a conference where figures were given to us. We were taken into confidence on various matters. Whatever some people may say, I am quite satisfied and it is only fair to say that the Hon. the Minister, Mr. Gopala Reddi, the Commissioner, Mr. Hanumantha Rao, and the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Matthews, have, paid very close attention to this business and are doing their very best. Whatever might be the complaints of the passengers, one thing is quite clear and that is that this department is working well, with officers who are devoted to the work on hand, and are doing their very best. Unfortunately they have inherited a burden which they cannot throw off. Sir, this is a matter which concerns not a few thousand persons, but nearly a million people in the City; it affects nearly 95 per cent of the population, since only 5 to 6 per cent of the population use cars. Even supposing there are 10,000 cars in the City, the number of car-owners will only be 1 per cent of the population, but the members of their family also use these cars, and so, the number of persons using these cars comes to about 5 to 6 per cent of the population. The rest of the people has naturally to resort to trams and buses. Not only persons employed in business concerns, but also Government servants, and

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the members of their family are using these buses. Without any fear of contradiction, I could say that in the case of a person earning about Rs. 50 per mensem, he and the members of his family would be spending nearly Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 on transport alone. That is really a very very heavy sum, for any person, to spend on conveyance and transport. Such being the case, now what have the Government done? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was asked to give some figures. Sir, I am told that there are about 32 routes in the City, which have been given successive numbers, out of which, I am told, two have been cancelled now. I am not sure about it, but I say that, subject to correction. On 18 routes, the fares have been increased—in the Triplicane-Parry's route from As. 2 to As. 2½, in the Mylapore-Parry's route from As. 3 to As. 3½, and in the Mylapore-Medical College route from As. 3 to As. 4, and so on. So, in general, without any exaggeration, the increase comes to nearly half an anna per head for every journey. Not only that. They have done another thing. The stages have been altered. And if any person gets in at any place, in between these stops, he has to pay an additional half an anna, whether he travels an extra quarter mile or half mile. Thus, for the man who is getting an income of Rs. 50 per mensem, his transport bill is increased by about Rs. 3-8-0 at the rate of about As. 2 a day. And all this, when even the previous fares that he has been paying so far have been sitting tight over his family budget. Sir, we must sympathize with those people. The Hon. Minister for Transport, or the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Transport do not use these buses, except for inspection and so they do not know the strain on the persons with low incomes caused by this enhancement of bus fares. This adjournment motion by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has attracted great attention in the City, and people are all waiting to see what explanation the Government can give.

"Sir, it is said there is rationalization. Of course, nationalization must be followed always by rationalization, as night follows the day. But the Government have invented a new dictionary. What is nationalization? Expropriation. What is rationalization? Enhancement of the bus fares. The public, Sir, are all deceived, and they do not know the real facts, nor do they know whether this is only a first enhancement, which will be followed by a second, third enhancement and so on. This nationalization started on the basis of the idea that people who were in this transport business had made lakhs and lakhs, if not crores, of rupees, and so the Government got the idea of nationalization in the hope that much money will come out of it. If I remember aright, Mr. Gopala Reddi himself once said that the Government are out to make money, and there was nothing wrong in that. But I have been emphasizing and reiterating the fact that the Government officers, by their very training and upbringing, as a result of the very ideas which they have imbibed from the red-tape system to which they have been all along attached, can never be good businessmen. They can never compete with the businessman. And if Mr. Hanumantha Rao or Mr. Mathews whom the Government to-day have

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put in charge of this Transport business, can make a success out of this business, the Government will lose them as they will no longer continue in Government service. I assure you, Sir, that though the figures that might be given by Government now may show something to the contrary, yet in the long run the Government will certainly lose in this business, simply because the businessman's mind is absent in these officers. There must be this human element in the business, if any profit is to be made out of it. The officers get their pay on the first of every month, if this Government are paying them on the first, or at any rate, before the 5th of the month. They are very little concerned with the success or loss in the business, for after all, if there is any loss, they may be merely transferred from one department to another. On the other hand, the businessman is so concerned with his business, that he will make it a success. And now, if these Government officers have to make a success out of the business, they have simply to increase these fares and that is what they have done now. A great mistake was made, when this nationalization was started, with the result that the common man is put to suffering not only on account of the enhanced bus fares, but even on account of the deplorable condition in which these State buses are now kept. Only the other day, a letter appeared in 'The Hindu' which brought out these things to the fore, and I do not think it would be contradicted. I have not personally got into a bus myself, but I have asked other people who travel in these buses, whether what was written in that letter was true or not. And those people confirmed what was written in that letter.

"Now, Sir, what is the condition of these State buses? We have torn seats, dirty seats, broken windows and leaky tops. The buses are not in the condition in which they were put on the road before.

"I quite appreciate the fact, that Government have recently put lady conductresses in some of these buses. But that has not added to any amenities to the passengers."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member may give some reasons why he appreciates the appointment of lady conductresses." (Laughter.)

* DR. V. K. JOHN:—"Even after that, I have not got into any of these buses, but I understand from other persons, and particularly from the smiling face of Mr. Gopala Reddi that he appreciates these lady conductresses. And we are told, their number may be still increased. And so there may be also music and dancing in the buses. But all that will not satisfy the poor man, who has to travel from one place to another, in these buses every day, and for whom an increment of As. 2 or As. 4 per day on transport constitutes a great budgetary problem. Sir, the Government have increased the bus fares, and they call it rationalization. I think I must give that credit either to the Commissioner or to the Deputy Commissioner, who is here just now, for having found out this word 'rationalization'. Sir, I submit there is no rationalization. If it were rationalization which Government have now done, they would have reduced

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these bus fares. But what have they actually done? They have enhanced the bus fares. And the travelling public certainly condemns the Government for this. And if any wrong figures are given by me or by anybody on the floor of this House, they can certainly be found out in no time. The Hon. Minister cannot rise up and say that the fare has not been increased from As. 3 to As. 4 on a certain route, and from As. 2½ to As. 3 on another route. If he says that, the people know how to characterize his statement. The facts are very clear that people are very much annoyed, and they are really suffering. Personally I think it is not because the Government of the day are unsympathetic to them, or to their suffering, but because they anticipate there will be a loss in the business, they have increased these fares. So, I would only ask them to give up this policy of nationalization, to go back to their old policy; there is nothing wrong in doing so. For, after all, a democratic Government has got to shape its policies, by a trial and error process. The Government of our Province have made a trial in the transport business. And it is high time, they go back to their old policy and leave the field open to private agencies, which will certainly run these buses in a better condition, and will cater to the needs of the travelling public in a much better way than these State transport authorities.

“Another result of this nationalization scheme is that conditions have gone worse even in the mufassal. We have not got good buses even in the mufassal. The bus-owners are not prepared to invest any more of their money in these buses, because they fear that this nationalization policy may be extended to the mufassal also, and Government may take over their buses.

“Sir, Government have now put a lot of money into this transport business—that money is of course from the public revenues. We do not want them to lose. I quite appreciate their difficulty. These Italian Diesel buses which they have bought for about Rs. 45,000 each are plying in the City, making a lot of noise, and throwing into the streets of the City, a lot of smoke. We have got bad-smelling water, and to that my Hon. Friend Mr. Gopala Reddi has added a smoky atmosphere. He is responsible for it, although he only inherited the bus and the smoke. It is quite true, they cannot now sell away these Italian buses—these dirty smoking things—for they may have to pay something to the purchaser and ask him to take possession of these buses! I think it is high time, Government should see that they do not get into disrepute in this manner. They do not know what people in the City are talking everywhere. If you go anywhere, where half a dozen people congregate, whether in a club or in the beach, or in the High Court corridors, you will find they condemn the Government transport policy. If this enhancement of bus fares had been done by any private individuals, the Government could have well-controlled them. It may be that the Government have now started more routes, and have provided some amenities to the travelling public. But yet, I would submit, Sir, that if the whole thing had been left in the hands of private individuals, they would have managed it much better.

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" Sir neither the Hon. Minister, nor the Deputy Commissioner nor the Commissioner of Transport, are responsible for this, individually, but the Hon. Minister in charge of Transport owes a collective responsibility as a member of the Government. I would ask them to reduce the fares at least to the old rates, and satisfy the public. Let them not touch the poor man's pocket. After all, they must look to the common man and his needs, and to the promotion of his welfare. Look to the welfare of the common man first, do not touch his pocket any more. Reduce the fares, and then call it rationalization. Give up this nationalization policy, and leave the field to private agencies once again. Sir, Government servants are required for some other purpose. Why should the Hon. Minister's time which is required for something better, be spent on something which these private agencies could do better? So my advice to Government is that they should give up their policy of nationalization.

" And before I conclude, I would like to repeat that the Government are doing their very best. Every one of the senior Government officers is incorruptible, and is scratching his brains to see whether the business could not be done more successfully. Sir, every one of these officers is, by training, not a businessman, but merely a Government servant. The officer has to use the subordinate servants to carry out his orders and, when some of them were found corrupt, has taken steps to see that every corrupt man is removed. The conduct of these officers is no doubt the best, but their best is not enough. The one thing which the Government can do and ought to do, in my opinion, is to give up this business, and the earlier they do so, the better. And before they give it up, I ask them to reduce these bus fares. If they cannot do that, I propose to divide this House on the motion that the Government be condemned for the raising of these bus fares."

* SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Sir, unlike the mover of the resolution, my object is not to condemn the Government but to offer suggestions and advice for the better running of the transport department of the Government. When the Traffic authorities decided to increase the bus fares in the name of rationalization, the Hon. Minister for Transport was away among our troops fighting in Kashmir. It was hoped that on his return to Madras he would take steps to set right the wrong done in his absence, but we find to-day that he is unrepentant over the affair. If it had been stated that this increase of fares was done in the name of anti-inflationary measures, whatever that might mean—there would have been some sense in it. The hard fact is that the bus fares have been increased. Take a concrete case. The fare which was three annas from Tyagarayanagar to Parry's Corner is now 4½ annas. I could have understood if the Hon. Minister had supported this increase on the ground of economics, I mean on the ground of anti-inflationary measures, that is to say, on the theory that the less the common man has in his pocket the better. I do not subscribe to that theory. Still if the Hon. Minister had mentioned it, I could have understood it. I could have also understood it, if it was stated that the Government were in need of revenue

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for some productive purpose. Then I believe the public would have accepted the increased bus fares. Did not the public accept the sales tax when it was wanted for a good cause—prohibition?

“The only ground, so far as I could see which is advanced to support this increase in fares, is rationalization. If I understand the meaning of rationalization, I take it to mean something which will appeal to commonsense and reason. What they have done in the name of rationalization is to equalize the bus fares for particular distances and put it at so much per mile. I submit that it is not the only consideration in fixing the fares. For instance, the nature of the route also will have to be taken into consideration. If rationalization means something which is sensible, the nature of the route also will have to be taken into consideration. For instance, in a crowded street in Triplicane, it would cost more for the bus to run, as more petrol would be required, and there would be more wear and tear of the bus. The cost of running the bus in a straight route, in a popular route, will be certainly less than the cost of running it in a less popular route. The Department will also have to take into consideration alternative transport facilities available. From Tyagarayanagar, there is an electric train service which costs three annas up to Beach Station. That must also be taken into consideration as one of the factors in fixing the bus fares.

“Sir, if rationalization was the only object, I ask why the bus fares could not be reduced. Instead of attempting at equalization by bringing the lower fares to the higher level, rationalization could have been accomplished by reducing the higher fares to the lower level. Instead of making the fare half anna per mile, if rationalization was the object, it could have been easily made quarter of an anna per mile and the Government could have earned the praise of the public. But the object of the Government is really to increase the fares. Then, Sir, there is what is known as the telescopic rate in fixing bus fares, by which the subsequent stages are charged less than the first stage. This is done in other parts of the country and in other parts of the world. I believe something could have been done to telescope the charges for greater distances.

“Sir, it is not so much the increase in the fares as the method of introducing it which has caused a great deal of concern to the public. There was no previous announcement, no proper advertisement. The travelling public were caught unawares one fine day when they were asked to pay more. Instances occurred where passengers got into the bus with insufficient money to pay the higher fares and were asked to get down. Why was not sufficient publicity and warning given?

“In regard to the bus fares, there is one thing which a popular Government should note and that is that the public opinion is definitely against this increase of fares. It is not accepted by the public in the way the sales tax was. Ask any passenger who is travelling in the bus, look into any newspaper and you will find that the increase in fares is one of the most unpopular measures ever introduced. It is not only unpopular, but also unnecessary.

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Did not the Hon. Minister say a few days ago that the State Transport was earning profits—I believe he used the words ‘large profits.’ If the State Transport was already earning large profits, what reason is there to increase the bus fares in the name of rationalization? The bus fares could well have been reduced and in that way made equal for equal distances.

“Sir, there is one other thing to be noted in this connexion, and that is, this is an anti-social measure. It is in the interests of a thickly populated City to have the suburbs developed, but if the cost of travel to and from a suburb 3 to 5 miles away is increased, the tendency of the residents will be to crowd inside the City. People who want to reside away from the City would be discouraged by increase in the cost of travel and it will not help in the proper growth of a town. That is a very important point.

“Then, Sir, there is one other stronger and larger reason which I wish to place before the Hon. Minister. This increase in the bus fares will tend to shatter the belief of the public in Government concerns. It is supposed to be a good social measure for the Government to own public concerns, but this increase in bus fares has cast discredit not only on the transport system run by the Government but has created doubts on the usefulness of all Government concerns. The public are asking: ‘If this is the result of the running of one industry by the Government, what will happen if they begin to run other industries?’ I ask this Government: ‘Would you have allowed a private operator to make this increase if he applied for it?’ Private operators were running buses and it was said they were making large profits by running buses between Tyagarayanagar and Parry’s Corner for three annas. Suppose the same operator had applied to the Government to increase the fares from 3 annas to 4½ annas, would the Government have approved of it? Would the Hon. Minister have allowed it? Would this House have agreed to such a thing? Certainly, Sir, if a private operator is willing to run decent buses between Georgetown and places like Tyagarayanagar for 3 annas, what justification is there for the Government to exploit its monopolistic position and ask passengers to pay 4½ annas? Sir, I am a well-wisher of the Government. I certainly ask the Hon. Minister for Transport to consult those who like me wish well of the Government, people like the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and others who are friends of the Government and who are in touch with public opinion see their reaction and take the necessary measures which will be welcomed by the public. This is something which touches not only the future of the Government, but which will have repercussions on the future of the party in power. I ask the Hon. Minister to consult responsible men and revise if necessary the policy which he has introduced.”

* K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB, BAHADUR:—
“Mr. President, Sir, it is on the lips of every passenger that the rates have been increased, while the reply which invariably comes from the Transport Department is that there is no increase but only rationalization and standardization and that the old Government Order of 1947 has been applied in a strictly logical manner.

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Theoretically, the reply of the Transport officer is quite correct so far as the application of the Government Order is concerned. The passengers—especially the poor and the middle and the lower middle class people—are not concerned so much with rationalization or standardization or any other 'tion' as with the money they have to part with. The net result of the so-called rationalization and standardization is that passengers have to pay more than what they have been accustomed to pay all along to the private bus owners. Many instances can be cited. It was $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas from Parry's Corner to Mount Road Post Office, but now it is 2 annas. From Mount Road to Triplicane which is not more than a mile, the fare used to be one anna, but now it is $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas. The one anna stage ends with Paragon Talkies. In many cases, these fare stages begin not at places where the largest number of passengers board or get down the bus, but at half or one furlong away from those places. I cannot complain against the wording of the original Government Order, it is very well worded. It only says that the stages should be fixed in such a way that each stage will as far as practicable approximate to a mile. But the phrase 'as far as practicable' and 'approximate' are conveniently ignored by the Transport officials in carrying out the rationalization scheme. Reasonableness seems to be wholly lacking in the working out of the scheme of rationalization. You cannot learn swimming on a table, but these officers sit in their rooms and fix the bus stages without any reference to the actual facts and the needs of the passengers. If they had applied their minds to this, these things could have been obviated. There are, however, certain bus stages which do not come to a mile. On route 21-P, from Mandaveli to the next fare stage, it is not one mile but less than half a mile. Whether it is rationalization or standardization, people have to pay more now. It is absolutely necessary for the Government to go into the matter again and see whether there is any necessity for this increase in fares. Is it not possible to introduce rationalization without increasing the fares? The 1947 Government Order has been there for more than a year and such a thing has not taken place. Why should it take place now? Do the passengers get any return for the increase in fares? No. When rains set in, there is keen competition between the buses and trams in letting the rain water in. The windows cannot be easily closed or opened. They always stay open or closed and are not amenable to the will of the passengers or the conductors. The result is that when the rains set in, the passengers get themselves completely drenched. I do not know why these buses should be in this condition. There is discontent among the public; there is also discontent among the workers; the workers say they are not being paid properly, that they are being over-worked, that the inspectors complain against them for nothing; some conductors were saying the other day that there were as many as three thousand complaints against the conductors; that most of them were suspended for fifteen days or thirty days without the complaints being enquired into and that the word of the inspectors is law. There is discontent among the workers, there is discontent among the public and there is discontent among the buses also (laughter); yes, when you get into the buses, you

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are confronted with loud noises, and noise means discontent (laughter). Anybody travelling in these buses will know that they make very huge noise and they are allowed to make their protests in this way presumably because they are not properly maintained or cared for. That is the condition of the bus transport in the City.

"In these circumstances, the people are quite legitimate in their complaint against increase in fares. Not only that; do the public get sufficient—not to speak of amenities—number of buses plying on the roads? You will find at almost every important bus stop large numbers of people waiting, some waiting for 30 minutes, even for 45 minutes. Why can you not have sufficient number of buses on the roads during the rush hours when there is much traffic? Recently, a certain suggestion was put forward and it is being put into effect in England, in Sheffield, I think. They station in important traffic centres a certain number of persons. Wherever they find a sufficiently large number of passengers waiting for buses, they at once inform the Central office by radio; at once, buses are sent to those particular places from the Central office, so that the passengers may go to their destinations early, and thereby congestion is relieved. Some such method may be adopted here also; you may have, if not radio, telephonic communication from the bus stops to the Central office and buses may be sent to the places where there is congestion and a large number of passengers are waiting. We must look into these matters from the point of view of the public. People are waiting in some places for even one hour and more for these buses to go to their destinations. Even in Parry's Corner, you find hundreds of persons waiting from 5 o'clock up to six and seven o'clock for buses. Is it not possible to relieve this congestion? It is not enough if you are simply actuated by the idea of getting more money; you must look to the convenience of the passengers. Suppose these buses were run by private enterprise, would not the Government have taken up the matter with them? The Hon. Minister stated 'Do not get into these buses.' You can very well say it now; if you have not eliminated competition, people surely would not get into your buses; but by your nationalization scheme, you have eliminated private enterprise, and so there is no other go for the people but to wait for the buses indefinitely and get into them to go to their destinations, in spite of the fact that they are all leaky and passengers are being jolted. I do not think the Transport Minister was serious when he said 'don't get into the buses'."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I do not think you took him seriously when he said it."

* K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I am very serious in what I say, Sir; because as the Leader of the Opposition stated, more than 90 per cent of the public are affected by this increase in fares. After all, it may be not more than one per cent of the population that travel in their own cars."

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"As regards the question of anti-inflation, I do not know how this increase in fares is going to relieve inflation. The poor and middle class people in the City have no inflated currency with them. It is to be found elsewhere and more effective steps should be taken to minimize inflation. These people are not even getting sufficient money even to make both ends meet, and how can you then say that it is for the purpose of minimizing inflation that you are taking this step of increasing fares."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—"Government did not say it was for the purpose of reducing inflation."

* K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—"Nowadays, it is freely said to be an anti-inflationary measure. If it is not so, well and good. Whatever may be the reason, people are anxious that they should not be made to pay more; not that they are unwilling to pay, but their purses are slender. So, Sir, with a heavy heart, I am supporting this motion; I say 'heavy heart' because of the suffering of the people. I see an Hon. Minister laughing; he may laugh because he is travelling in his car. But poor people have to travel in these buses under these circumstances four, five and ten miles, to get to their destinations."

* SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—"Sir, I want to make my own contribution to this debate but not in a spirit of condemnation or censure as was done by the mover Mr. Farookhi Sahib who is not here. This is a question which affects the poor and the middle class people. I belong to the middle classes; I am not a man who can be considered to be rich. I have boys here in Madras whom I am educating, one of whom is in the Victoria Hostel and has to go to the Law College and come back. Formerly, he was spending about Rs. 12 or so for his bus fares from Triplicane to Law College and back for a month. Now, the amount has swelled up to Rs. 20, and that comes to about 12½ per cent of the amount I send him. And when I ask, he complains 'it is the bus fare that has increased' and so he has to spend more."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—"What about cinema fares?"

* SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—"He also gives me his cinema expenses; he sends me the details of his monthly expenditure; and I of course ask him not to go to cinemas but to apply himself more and more to his studies. Before the nationalization of buses was introduced, private proprietors were making enormous profits. That is my experience; even in Bellary, I know several people who were running buses on their own account were making immense profit even with less than half of the fare now charged in Madras City. Since the Government took over the transport, they have published figures, I think, on two occasions, they have made considerable profit, and I see there is no necessity for any increase of fare at all. The result is that poor people, especially those whose salaries are meagre, between Rs. 60 and Rs. 100 and less, are

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feeling the burden too much. It is not a case where they can walk the whole distance from their residences to Georgetown; several of them are accustomed to go in these buses. I therefore on behalf of the poor and the middle class people, who cannot afford to pay the excess fare, plead with the Government; I appeal to them to examine the whole thing and see that the fares are reduced. As I said before, there is no reason why, when they are already making a profit, they should make excess profit. It is not for that purpose that this nationalization was introduced. If nationalization is to be applied in the same manner to the mufassal also—that was the original intention of Government—they wanted to proceed with nationalization in Ootacamund, Kodaikanal and in several of the mufassal centres—it will mean greater trouble for the people. At present in the mufassal, they are having only nominal fares; for instance, for a distance of 40 miles from Bellary to Hospet to my own district, they charge Rs. 1-4-0; and when nationlization is introduced in the mufassal, at the rate at which fare is charged in Madras, what would be the rate there I wonder. I think, Sir, this is a fit case for the Government to reconsider—I think that is the word used in the reported speech of the Hon. Minister—it is a case for reconsideration in the direction of reducing the fares. And I trust and I appeal to the Hon. Finance Minister to go into the question and give relief to the poor and the middle class sections of the people of the City. With these few words, Sir, I close my speech. I do not propose to vote for this as a vote of censure or a vote of condemnation, I may make it clear, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"What does the hon. Finance Minister say? Will he speak now?"

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"I think Mr. Suryanarayana Rao wants to speak; I have no objection to his speaking for a few minutes, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"Mr. Suryanarayana Rao will take a few minutes, I think, as Members are all anxious to hear the Hon. Finance Minister on the subject."

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO:—"I will not take more than a few minutes, Sir. Since I saw yesterday's announcement in the papers, announcing increase in the price of foodstuffs, I have been wondering what would be the fate of the people with fixed incomes, with increased bus fares and increased price of rice. Sir, the increased price of rice is to be given effect to from the 21st November, and I am told by the 'Mail' that the increase will be by about 2 annas per measure. What is to be the condition of the people with fixed incomes like the salaried servants of Government? Already the Government are aware that there has been great discontent in the services and also in other establishments where people are employed on fixed pay. As a result of increased bus fares, there will be a demand for higher salaries and higher wages. Sir, the more we charge for the necessities of life—and I believe conveyance especially in the City of Madras has become a necessity of life—the more we charge for food and for

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cloth under controlled conditions, the more will be the cry for increased wages and increased salaries. Is this going to be an anti-inflationary measure? I wish, Sir, when Government take steps such as these, they would envisage what effect they would have upon what my leader is always pleased to say 'the common man.'

"The 'common man' is greatly hit. A few people who can afford, who get high salaries, think that this increase of half an anna from Mylapore terminus to Parry's Corner is a flea-bite; but to those with fixed incomes, especially fixed small incomes like clerks in the Secretariat and those employed in commercial establishments, this increase of one anna per day means quite a good deal of hardship making inroads into their small income.

"I plead on behalf of the people with small fixed incomes that this increase in bus fares would seriously affect their family budget. Is the State, it might be asked, bound to take into account the effect any of their actions will have on the family budgets of the public; is any commercial concern bound to do it and are the Government to consider this aspect? A commercial concern is not the same as Government. The Government is supposed to have a heart which we are not able to divine where it is; it is supposed to have sympathy and understanding for the people whom they govern, to understand the difficulties under which they live and to promote measures of welfare for their benefit. If it is meant to be a measure of welfare for the City, it is going to have a bad effect. People will naturally ask: 'Is the Bus Transport Service of the Government running at a loss?' What is the necessity for the Government to increase the fares? Generally in a commercial concern, if they have to make up what they spend by way of production costs. It may not be for purposes of declaring a dividend—they will have to increase the value of their wares. So far as my information goes, owing to the vigilance of the Hon. Minister for Transport and the Transport Officers, the Bus Service is not running at a loss. Then is it necessary to increase the fares just at this time, when, as I said, the family budgets of poor people with fixed incomes are in a bad way and they are not able to stand further strain. There has been much talk about lack of amenities to passengers and I may say, in that connexion, that the Government Bus Service with all its faults—in our heart of hearts we are feeling like that—has been a better service than the private service (The Hon. Sri B. Gopala Reddi: 'Though you will not say in public). I am sure hon. members feel that the service has been greatly improved. But there is the personal element of the bus conductor with his discourtesy and the unhelpful attitude of the man stationed in the bus terminus in guiding the passengers which leaves much to be desired. For all these factors, we cannot blame the Government and by and by they will be changed and if complaints are taken to the notice of the transport authorities, they will be rectified. Even if more amenities are provided, if the staff is a little more courteous and attentive to the passengers, are the passengers to be required to pay for such improvements by way of increased fares? It is ingrained in the system itself and

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every commercial concern proceeds on the footing that courtesy always pays. Therefore, I do not think that the Government is justified in increasing the fares.

"I have one suggestion to make regarding rationalization. Attempts at rationalization in industries has led to strikes. But rationalization of bus fares cannot lead to strike on the part of the passengers though it may lead to something else which may be worse, viz., fall in income. Is it not possible to keep the old rates from one terminus to the other and rationalize the fare from one stage to the other so that ultimately the fare from one terminus to the other remains unchanged. I will quote one instance. I take the bus going from Mylapore Tank to Parry's Corner at Pudupet and get down at the Muhammadan College or the Madras Club. I think I shall have to pay two annas. The stage does not begin at the Royapettah Police Station or the Hospital but at an out-of-the-way place where there was a bus stop previously but it was removed from there when the private buses were running. I agree rationalization is all right but it should be done consistent with the convenience of passengers. I would suggest to the Government to consider whether the fares from one terminus to the other could not be kept intact and the fares between the intermediate stages might be so arranged that the Government will not be inconvenienced and at the same time the fares will be reasonable and rationalistic. I hope the Hon. Minister for Transport with the help of the Transport Officers who have every consideration for passengers—will examine this suggestion. The officers adopted the principle of rationalisation and to that extent we cannot blame them. They should be able to so alter this principle of rationalization that even at the expense of giving up the principle in its entirety that there is no additional burden on the bus passengers and at the same time ensure more revenue to the State."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Mr. President, Sir, as expected we had a very interesting debate. But I am sorry, Sir, that all their pet prejudices have come out in the course of the debate and their vehemence against nationalization has been given full expression to. We are aware that the Leader of the Opposition was never a friend of the nationalization scheme. Right from the beginning he has been opposing the move on the part of the Government to nationalize transport system either in the City or in the mufassal and on more than one occasion he has given expression to it in very strong terms against nationalization and to-day again utilizing this opportunity he has gone back to his old theme that the Government ought not to have nationalized the bus service. Likewise, the Mover of the Resolution himself is not known for his sympathy for the Congress Government; he has his old prejudices against the Congress Organization and having been bred and brought up in the ideologies of the Muslim League till recently, he cannot divest himself of his old prejudices against the Congress Government and he is only trying to beat the Congress Government so that he can satisfy his innermost conscience in the hope that he has done something to put down the prestige of the Congress Organization, otherwise I cannot understand the

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spirit of the speech when he said that everybody is condemning the Government for their move from their house tops, that there has been slogans that what the Government is doing is not in the interests of the poor and this hymn of condemnation is coming from all sides. With regard to these condemnations I shall give the figures later on. I do not think Sir, simply because there are about 20 people who have chosen to write letters to the Press either in 'the Hindu,' 'the Express,' or 'the Mail,' it means that the entire system is being condemned by reasonable men. I know that any taxation measure is not popular and all taxation measures from the Government are unpopular and are viewed with suspicion. That apart Sir, this rationalization scheme of the Government in the Transport Department is not condemned by all people. Because Sir, in 14 routes there has been no enhancement and why should there be any condemnation on their part and in certain other intermediate stages there is lessening of the fares and should they not be thankful to the Government and can they condemn the move of the Government? It is not as though there is universal condemnation coming from all people. *Status quo* has been maintained in 14 routes perhaps in 21 routes there has been enhancement and I shall presently tell you why. In a matter like this it ought to be considered objectively and not merely on the basis of pet theories and political prejudices. And I therefore want that this question should be examined fairly on its own merits and not with any political bias. Some people have criticised me saying that we are earning large profits. When I say that, immediately there are our friends who will say "How is it, it is not the intention of the Government to make profits. You must only look to the convenience of the passengers and you have to reduce the fares." If I say I am not making any profit, immediately the Leader of the Opposition will come and tell you: 'Did I not tell you so when you introduced nationalization that you are going to lose and that you must not nationalize and that your management is not going to be efficient and that you are going to lose crores of rupees. I said even then that this is a doubtful venture on the part of the Government.' So, Sir, I will have to follow the golden mean. Sometimes, I will have to say that I am losing."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—"Why not say the truth."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—"The Budget will be speaking the truth and it will be presented to you on the 26th February and you can make out the position from it."

"To say that our buses are making a lot of noise, that there is not much convenience to the public that you do not care for the common man do not carry us any further. It is no use telling that to the Government because the man in the street really feels that we have given them more convenience, we have opened up more routes we have put more buses on the road in the City and to-day, if we take the figures, we are carrying a large number of passengers from one terminus to the other than ever it was done previously. That must be borne in mind. I can give you statistics

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if you want; I can tell you how many passengers are being carried on our buses daily, what is the mileage we are covering what is the cost of running the buses. When I had occasion to show some of these figures to the Transport Authorities in New Delhi who are in charge of the Transport Department in New Delhi under the very nose of the Government of India, experts in charge of this business were very greatly pleased at the low cost of maintenance.

“As I said, Sir, it is not really a taxation measure. Apparently on the surface it looks as though we have enhanced the rates and that the poor man is being hit and he is obliged to pay a little more every day towards his transport. So, for all purposes, it is a taxation measure and no taxation measure is popular, as you know. Ultimately it would result—if our optimistic calculations come true—in an income of Rs. 1,000 a day or Rs. 30,000 a month or about three lakhs and sixty thousand rupees a year. For a measure which gives the Government three lakhs and sixty thousand rupees, there need not be such ‘universal condemnation’ and the Government need not be taken to task for getting this amount in the course of one full year.”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“This is collected from a million people.”

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“When a million people pay these three lakhs and sixty thousand rupees, the proportion will be a pie for each individual or perhaps one anna for each individual. Thus the *per capita* contribution will be insignificant—a flea-bite.”

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—“What about the people with fixed incomes.”

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“Sir, let us take the statistics of the population in the City and see the percentage of those people with fixed incomes and the percentage of other people. I am sure, the percentage of people with fixed incomes may not be very large. Perhaps it may be 10 or 15 per cent in the City and the rest 85 per cent of the people are not having fixed incomes.”

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—“Sir, the users of buses are mostly people with fixed incomes.”

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“Sir, I do not think the percentage can be higher than 20 or 25 per cent. That is my calculation.”

“Now, Sir, let me come to rationalization. This rationalization has been criticised on the floor of this House, in the Press and on the platform. Let me say that nobody has objected to our Orders passed in November 1947. As far as I could see, my hon. Friend had also welcomed the Government Order. But only when it comes to the question of application, all this criticism comes and

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there is 'universal condemnation.' The fares fixed in the Government Order are one anna for the first mile and half anna for every subsequent mile. I do not see any reason why anybody should take objection to the application of this Government Order. It is beyond reproach. What holds good for the Madras City also holds good for Madura, Coimbatore, Vijayawada, Nellore and other towns. In Madura and in Coimbatore and in Vijayawada and in other places, the private bus operators—or whoever is running the bus—are applying this Government Order strictly and collecting one anna for the first mile and half an anna for each subsequent mile."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Sir, in the Madras City in some routes the rate for the first mile is one anna and a half and one anna for the subsequent mile."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" The Leader of the Opposition is very often misinformed. This is not the correct rate. The actual fare for the first mile is one anna and half an anna for every subsequent mile. This is the rate prevailing not only in the Madras City but also in the mufassal cities. When a passenger in Madura or Coimbatore pays this rate, why should a passenger in City make so much noise? Is it because he has easy access to the Press and to the members of the Legislature?"

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Was he paying that before? "

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" I am coming to that point. The rates fixed in the Government Order are being strictly applied in the Madras City also. It is universally applied. Just imagine the M. & S.M. Railway charging one rate for the journey from Guntakal to Nandyal and a higher rate for the journey from Bellary to Hospet. Will the people of Bellary and Hospet keep quiet? Thus, on the railways there cannot be different rates for different sections on the same system. Similarly, there cannot be one rate for Madura or Coimbatore and another rate for Madras.

" To-day, in 14 routes this Government Order is strictly applied and there is no necessity for enhancing the fares on these routes. They are paying according to the Government Order one anna for the first mile and half an anna for every subsequent mile. They are now paying these fares without grumbling and they are pleased that it has not been raised. But why should people on certain other routes enjoying concessions provided by private operators for reasons not known to me or to the Leader of the Opposition, continue to pay three annas, when according to strict mathematical calculations, they should pay four annas or $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas. When a man from Purasawalkam is paying for his transport at one anna for the first mile and half an anna for each subsequent mile, why should a man from Thyagayanagar to the Parry's Corner—distance of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles—pay three annas. He was somehow 'defrauding' the Government all these days by not paying an anna and a half more. In fact, we must collect even the arrears from them."

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SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—“ Sir, is it not a fact that a more popular route can be operated more economically and at a cheaper rate.”

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“ Sir, no reference was made to this aspect of the question in the speeches so far made by hon. Members criticising the policy of the Government. We must be fair to all people. If we charge three annas for $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the Thyagarayanagar route, we must proportionately reduce the fare on 14 other routes. Why should one part of the City pay less and the other part of the City pay more? Is it that the Purasawalkam people should pay more and the Mylapore and Thyagarayanagar people should pay less because the former cannot make more noise and get people to champion their cause? Mr. Ibrahim has also welcomed the Government Order (K. T. M. Ahamad Ibrahim Sahib Bahaḍur rose from his seat). I am not yielding.”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Sir, I want to divide the House on this issue.”

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—“ You may divide the House or do whatever you like. Sir no member has taken any objection to the Government Order or to the rates prescribed in the Government Order. The objection is, as I said, in the beginning, to its application. The application must be universal. Whatever applies to the northern part of the city must also apply to the southern part of the city. We must take the actual distance into consideration and charge fares according to the Government Order. We had charged three annas on the route from Mylapore to Parry's Corner and now we are charging four annas. Therefore, it is wrong to say that there is 50 per cent enhancement. An enhancement of one anna and a half is only in one route, i.e., from Thyagarayanagar to Parry's Corner. For one year people travelling by this route had been enjoying a concession to which they were not entitled. The rate the people in the northern parts of the city are paying should also be paid by people in Mylapore and Thyagarayanagar.

“ Sir, then I come to the vexed question of ‘stages’. I had on three or four occasions, discussions with the officials. I did plead, looking from a layman's point of view that it must be on a rationalised system. As it is, as soon as one mile is reached, it is one stage and the subsequent stage is one mile and so on. But the administrative difficulty is there. It is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Thyagarayanagar to Parry's Corner. Suppose at a particular place where the stage is to be fixed, it is not a convenient place, it will have to be shifted a little up or down. That means that a particular stage may be nine furlongs and another stage may be seven furlongs. In this connexion, Mr. Ibrahim also complained that a stage is fixed even for six furlongs and we are charging one anna for it. Sir, in this matter, you must give some latitude and allow the officers to fix the stage for 10 furlongs or 6 furlongs as it is convenient and as circumstances require. Otherwise, we cannot adjust the difference between the stages. The distance from Thyagarayanagar to Parry's Corner is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It must be divided into seven convenient stages. Therefore, what does it

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matter if a stage is not fixed at a particular place and when a passenger has to pay according to the distance he travels and the total fare on this route works out at the rates fixed in the Government Order. If there are any grievances in the fixation of stages, the matter can be certainly gone into. But if in this process we fix the stage at a convenient place and reduce the distance to five or six furlongs, then also there will be any amount of criticism from the public. There will be 'universal' condemnation. So, I am in a dilemma as to what to do in his matter. Either I must strictly and mathematically fix the stages and ask them to pay accordingly or I must have stages of varying lengths, with the average at one mile per stage."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Sir, as the Hon. Minister is in a dilemma, I beg to move a motion under rule 62 of the Council Rules. Rule 62 says—

(1) *At any time after a motion has been made, a member may move "that the question be now put, and unless it shall appear to the President that such motion is an abuse of the rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of reasonable debate, the question 'that the question be now put' shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate"*"

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" I have not finished my speech."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" Sir, rule 62 is not applicable to an adjournment motion."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Let the Hon. Minister be allowed to continue his speech."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" Sir, on behalf of the Government, only one Minister is speaking and nearly all the members including Congress Members, in a way criticized the Government. So, I will take some more time."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" But you cannot speak beyond 6 o'clock."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" Sir, with regard to stages I would like to have constructive criticisms from my friends and if there is any stage fixed at an inconvenient place, I will certainly look into the question and see that it is shifted to a more convenient place."

" Sir, with regard to the conveniences in the bus, I have to give some figures also. Under the private management there were 190 buses with a seating capacity of 21 and standing accommodation for 8 or 10. That was the maximum number of buses they had even in the peak years when they had earned huge profits."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" What was the population at that time?"

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" Sir, they are not so much multiplied since. We have put in 238 buses actually on the

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road and 75 per cent of them have seating accommodation for 30 and standing accommodation for 15 more. (An hon. Member : ' But how many are under repairs? ') The Government have 310 buses all told and not less than 238 buses are put on the road. Therefore, what does it matter how many are inside the workshops. By simply going from Central to Mount Road, you cannot say that a large number of buses are in the shed. And some people even say that more buses are in the workshop and in the shed than on the road. But actually on an average not less than 238 buses are on the road. Forty-five persons can easily take their seats, I mean, including standing passengers and they all can reach their destination. So, that is a great convenience in spite of increased population. For what we have done, if we calculate, it will be found it is certainly much more than any private operator could have provided for, and so the public cannot complain."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I rise on a point of order. It is now six o'clock and the debate must close now. There is no provision in the rule extending the time for an adjournment motion. The rule says, the debate shall automatically terminate at 6 p.m. and thereafter no question can be put."

6 p.m.

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Cannot the clock be put back? "

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" The rule says the debate *shall* automatically terminate."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Perhaps the Hon. Law Minister wants the rule to be enforced strictly. I do not know why he is anxious about it."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I am as much entitled to claim my pound of flesh." (Laughter.)

A VOICE :—" He does not want his colleague to explain to the House . . ."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I can talk as much as my friend."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Evidently the Law Minister wants to come to the rescue of his colleague."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" There is no doubt the debate should close down at six o'clock. But the House and the public would like to know what the Hon. Minister has to say."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" Sir, is it your ruling that beyond six o'clock I can go on with my speech?"

MR. PRESIDENT :—" You cannot go on as a rule; but if you have anything special to say, I will allow you to go on."

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" I would like the rule to be observed, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The motion is talked out. The House will now adjourn and meet again to-morrow at 11 a.m."